

**The CPP deplores the deaths and destruction caused by the rape of our forests and wanton  
destruction of the environment  
(Statement of the Communist Party of the Philippines  
in the Wake of the Recent Typhoons)  
December 5, 2004**

**The Communist Party of the Philippines and the entire Philippine revolutionary movement deplore the death of more than a thousand people and the ruin of the homes, farms, property and livelihood of hundreds of thousands of people along the Sierra Madre in the Cagayan Valley, eastern Central Luzon, eastern Laguna, eastern Rizal and northern Quezon due to the flash floods, landslides and other destruction wrought by the recent typhoons Winnie and Yoyong. The CPP and the revolutionary movement at the same time express their utmost sympathy to the families haplessly victimized by the the criminal acts of commission and omission that have been behind these deaths and destruction.**

**Rampant illegal as well as “legalized” logging have been denuding and destroying the forests in the Sierra Madre and elsewhere in the Philippines from the very onset of imperialist plunder and rape of our country, well up to the present. The imperialist and their local collaborators have been depleting the forest regions as well as other natural resources of our country for more than half a century now. In fact, during the 1950s to the 1980s, the export of logs became one of the biggest dollar earners and one of the most lucrative sources of illegal wealth of Department of Natural Resources and Malacañang officials. The imperialists and their local collaborators had no other concern but to run away with the loot and superprofits out of their plunder of our natural wealth. The worsening environmental crisis has been part and parcel of the deepening chronic crisis of the ruling semicolonial, semifeudal crisis obtaining in the country.**

**These plunderers have left behind nothing but denuded mountains, depleted resources, a ravaged environment and a people who have been rendered defenseless from big typhoons and other natural disasters and have been placed always at the brink of death, ruin, poverty and extreme suffering anytime such big typhoons and disasters hit the country. These criminals have not a single bit of regard for our national patrimony, nothing for our environment, and not the least of concern for our people and the generations to come. By the 1980s, very little has been left of our forest cover and much of our other natural wealth have been depleted.**

**The 1995 Philippine Mining Act even further encouraged wanton forest depletion by giving permission to big mining companies to cut wide swaths of forest areas for their mining road construction as well as for their own needs. The destruction of forests by open-pit mining operations was even worse. The mining companies have all the more abused this leeway by selling logs and timber on the side.**

**By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, more than 93% of our forest cover has already been lost, more than 13.2 million hectares of 50% of which was due to the plunder of our forests during the last 50 years of the puppet republic.**

**The present official “total log ban” policy in the face of such depletion of our forests is nothing but a sham. It is actually just a cover name for the “mopping up operations” of our forests. The ruling Arroyo regime has given several open and secret concessions and exemptions to the**

**“total log ban” for the benefit of its cronies and their imperialist partners. With explicit government favor, big comprador-capitalists, big bureaucrat capitalists, big smuggling syndicates and top military commanders have collaborated with US and Japanese imperialists in the depletion of our forests in an unbridled manner and without letup.**

**Illegal logging, along with illegal drug trafficking, illegal gambling and other syndicated crimes have been the most lucrative source of crooked wealth of the top officials of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police as well as Malacañang insiders. The Northern Luzon Command (NOLCOM), especially its 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, and the Southern Luzon Command (SOLCOM), especially its 202<sup>nd</sup> Philippine Army Brigade have in particular been notoriously protecting and directly overseeing the illegal as well as “legalized” logging operations in the Rizal and Quezon parts of the Sierra Madre. Philippine Army and Philippine National Police forces are specifically assigned to give armed protection to the loggers and their cargo in log ponds and in transport. Oftentimes, in collaboration with Department of Energy and Natural Resources officials, army and police forces pretend to confiscate illegally-cut logs just to provide legal cover for their transport until finally delivering them to their illegal buyers.**

**Characteristic of the Arroyo regime and the AFP’s evasion of responsibility for their own wrongdoing, they have been trying to shift the blame on to the New People’s Army and the revolutionary movement for the denudation of the Sierra Madre and the deaths and destruction that occurred in the wake of the recent typhoons. They now say that because of the presence of the NPA in the Sierra Madre, the illegal logging operations there could not have happened without the permission of the NPA. They falsely and maliciously claim that the revolutionary tax the NPA used to collect from big logging operations before the revolutionary movement instituted its own actual total log ban several years ago was tantamount to permission for continued logging operations. As a matter of fact, whatever revolutionary tax was collected from big logging operators before was a form of penalty for the destruction they have done on the forest resources.**

**The CPP denounces such utter lies and brazen efforts of the reactionary government to shirk responsibility for the many deaths and mass destruction. The CPP, the NPA and the revolutionary movement in no way have been engaged in or have given permission to big destructive logging operations in our forest regions. In fact, the CPP, the New People’s Army and the revolutionary movement have consistently been against rampant illegal as well as “legalized” logging. The CPP, the NPA and the revolutionary movement have taken strong measures to warn the perpetrators of big wanton logging operations and have sternly punished the incorrigible ones. In 2003, the NPA raided to punish a big logging operation in Dinapigue, Isabela and encountered forces of the CPLA, a paramilitary force of the AFP in the Cordillera and Cagayan Valley, while the forces of the 5<sup>th</sup> ID of the Philippine Army was running away with trucks of illegally-cut logs.**

**Applying democratic methods, the Party, the people’s army and the revolutionary people’s organizations have also gone through the extent of actively promoting and advancing sustainable agriculture to more than compensate for the revolutionary restrictions even on small logging operations of some forest region residents. At the same time, the Party and revolutionary organizations have also advised small kaingeros to ensure the protection of the forests.**

**The CPP also denounces the Arroyo regime for its utter insensitivity and inutility before so many deaths and such massive ruin that have struck tens of thousands of peasant families in the Sierra Madre. Only tokens of relief have reached a measly few among the hundreds of thousands of**

**victims of the recent disasters. In the face of the reactionary government's bureaucratic irresponsibility and inability, the CPP instructs the Party organizations, the NPA units and the revolutionary and democratic mass organizations it leads to do what they can to extend whatever support they can give to the people in the areas affected by the deaths and destruction.**